

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph 0022 on page 7 with the following rewritten paragraph:

Figure 1 is a schematic block diagram illustrating one embodiment of a postage generation system 100 of the present invention. The postage generation system 100 may comprise user access device or an access module 102, a printer 104, a stamp operation server 106 (herein referred to as a “server”), and a data communication network or communications channel 112. In one embodiment, the access module 102 may be a desktop computer or server configured with a stamp generator module 110. Alternatively, the access module 102 may comprise a ~~PDA~~, personal digital assistant (PDA) mobile phone, or any electronic device wherein the access module 102 may be configured to operate. The stamp generator module 110 may be configured to likewise operate within portable computers such as notebooks and handheld devices. In a further embodiment, the access module 102 may be configured to communicate with a printer 104 over the communications channel 112. The communications channel 112 is preferably a local area network (LAN). Alternatively, the communications channel 112 may comprise a ~~WAN~~ a wide area network (WAN), ~~WLAN~~ a wireless local area network (WLAN), or a direct connection such as ~~USB™~~ universal serial bus (USB), ~~Firewire™~~ IEEE 1394 (FIREWIRE® (registered by Apple Computer, Inc. of Cupertino, California)), or the like.

Please replace paragraph 0023 on pages 6-7 with the following rewritten paragraph:

The access module 102 may communicate with the server 106 over the communications channel 112. In one embodiment, the communications channel 112 may comprise the Internet-~~112~~. In a further embodiment, the server 106 and the access module 102 may be configured to operate within the same local area network. The server 106 may comprise a verification module ~~114~~, 114 and a

database 116. The verification module 114 may be configured with a communication module 118 and a validation module 120. The communication module 118 may comprise a network interface card that is well known in the art and does not require further explanation herein.

Please replace paragraph 0024 on page 7 with the following rewritten paragraph:

In one embodiment, the stamp generator module 110 may communicate a stamp generation request with the verification module 114. The communication module 118 receives the ~~request~~, request and the validation module 120 validates the request. Validating the request may be one advantage of the present invention. The present invention enables a customer to create customized postage stamp or individually selected postage stamp. As defined herein, customized postage may comprise any image, text, numbers, or combination thereof as selected or created by a user. However, it would not be beneficial to allow a customer to create and use postage that resembles the trademarked or copyrighted logo of another company. For example, without the validation module 120 a user would be able to create postage that resembles the ~~Coca-Cola®~~ COCA-COLA® (registered to Coca-Cola Company of Atlanta, Georgia) logo. The validation module 120 validates the stamp generation request by accessing the database 116. This process will be discussed in greater detail with reference to Figure 3.

Please replace paragraph 0025 on pages 7-8 with the following rewritten paragraph:

Figure 2 is a schematic block diagram illustrating one embodiment of a stamp generator module 110. In the illustrated embodiment, the stamp generator module 110 may comprise a creation module 202, a selection module 204, a communication module 206, a preview module 208, a print module 210, and a purchase module 212. The creation module 202 may be configured to enable a user to draw or write a customized stamp. It is also contemplated to design the creation module 202 to interface with drawing and image manipulation programs

such as Adobe Photoshop®, Adobe Illustrator®, PHOTOSHOP® or ILLUSTRATOR® (both registered to Adobe Systems Incorporated of San Jose, California) or MGI Photosuite® PHOTOSUITE® (registered to Roxio, Inc. of Santa Clara, CA). For example, the creation module 202 may be activated from the drawing or illustrating program as an export option. Alternatively, the creation module 202 may comprise an image manipulation program configured for creating image or text based stamps.

Please replace paragraph 0026 on page 8 with the following rewritten paragraph:

If a user or access module does not want to design their own image, text or use their company logo, it is contemplated to let a user select a stamp from a pre-approved selection of stamps. The selection module 204 may be configured to allow the user to select from the pre-approved stamps. In one embodiment, the stamp generator module 110 may access the database 116 and download a selection of pre-approved stamps. Alternatively, the stamp generator module 110 may comprise a local database (not shown) configured to store a selection of pre-approved stamps. Once a stamp is created or selected, the communication module 206 may communicate with the server 106 over communication channels ~~108~~ 112. As described above with reference to the communication module 118, the stamp generator communication module 206 may comprise a network interface card.

Please replace paragraph 0027 on page 8 with the following rewritten paragraph:

In another embodiment, the preview module 208 may be configured to preview the stamp before printing. Once approved by the user, the print module 210 is configured to prepare the stamp for printing. Alternatively, the print module 210 may be operatively coupled to the printer ~~104~~, 104 and configured to receive stamp generation requests from the access module 102. In a further embodiment, the purchase module 212 may be provided and configured to accept payment information from the user and transmit the information to the server 106. It is also contemplated to allow payment information to include credit card

information. Alternatively, the payment information may comprise account information for automatic billing.

Please replace paragraph 0028 on pages 8-9 with the following rewritten paragraph:

Figure 3 is a schematic flow chart diagram illustrating one embodiment of a method 300 for stamp generation of the present invention. The method 300 starts 302 and a user selects 304 an image or text from a selection of pre-approved stamps. Alternatively, the user may create 306 the image or text based stamp using the creation module 202 of Figure 2. Once the image is selected 304 or created 306, the communication module 206 sends 308 the image or text for validation over the communication channel ~~108~~ 112. The communication module 118 of the server 106 receives 312 the stamp ~~312~~ and the validation module 120 validates 314 the stamp. In one embodiment, the validation module 120 validates 314 the stamp by accessing the database 116 and comparing the stamp to the stamps stored in the database 116. Furthermore, the validation module 120 may be configured to authorize the user to use a corporate, trademarked, or copyrighted logo.

Please replace paragraph 0029 on page 9 with the following rewritten paragraph:

Once validated 314, the server 106 communicates the validation to the access module 102, and the scaling module 120 determines 318 whether the stamp was validated or not. If not, the method 300 starts 302 again. If validated 318, the stamp may then be previewed 320 and the user may accept 322 the stamp. If the user does not accept the stamp, then the method 300 may start 302 again. In one embodiment, the accepted stamp may then be finalized 324 by the print module ~~210, 210~~ and the user then purchases 326 the stamp as discussed above. The communication module 206 may then transmit the stamp to the printer 104 for printing 328 and the method 300 ends 330.